

Oñate's Foot

Remembering and Dismembering in Northern New Mexico

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ABSTRACT: This essay analyzes the historical construction of "Spanish" icons in northern New Mexico and the complex Hispanic and Chicano identities they both evoke and mask. It focuses on the January 1998 vandalism of a statue depicting New Mexico's first Spanish colonial governor, Don Juan de Oñate. The removal of the Oñate statue's foot references a brutal colonial encounter in 1599, when Oñate ordered the amputation of one foot each from Pueblo men in the rebellious Native American village of Acoma. In this case study, national and regional narratives as well as self-consciously oppositional narratives collude, conflict, and supplement one another. I conclude that the vandalized statue offers a dynamic and "open" icon that powerfully represents the contradictions of New Mexican Chicana/o identity, shedding light on the complex and contradictory identities of all Mexican-origin peoples in the United States.

Michael Taussig writes that when the human body or a public statue is defaced, a surplus of negative energy is aroused within the defaced thing itself. Such acts cut into the circle of understanding, and out of the breach spills a contagious, proliferating force (Taussig 1999, 1). This essay uses Taussig's insights to examine an act of monumental dismemberment. During the final days of 1997 or the first days of 1998, some people—it required more than one—drove toward the Oñate Monument and Visitors Center just north of the town of Española, New Mexico. The chill air of a northern New Mexican winter night must have bit them as they removed the power equipment from their vehicle somewhere along the side of State Highway 68. They had planned well. The state trooper who lived in the neighboring mobile home was out of town, and there was no one watching over the deserted center. They must have stood among the timbers that served as pillars for the monument and looked at the larger-than-life bronze statue of

New Mexico's first Spanish colonial governor, Don Juan de Oñate. Perhaps after a few moments of hesitation, if any, they began to cut off Oñate's right foot. Early the next morning, they sent a message and a photo of the amputated foot to the *Albuquerque Journal's* northern bureau in Santa Fe. The statue cutters were never caught, and the foot was never found.¹

The essay explores the crisis the foot cutting provoked and thus enters the complex realm of Nuevomexicanos' embodied ethnic/racial identity. Among Nuevomexicanos, divergent identities such as "Hispanic," "Chicano," and "Spanish" compete and contest one another (Gonzales 1993).² Such battles are not exclusive to New Mexico, as notions of race and racial mixture play a dominant role in discussions of Latin American and U.S. Latino identity and culture. In literature and popular culture, the mixed-race or mestizo body is a site of contestation that both signifies and incarnates the multiple forces at play upon and within it (Pérez-Torres 2006). This essay demonstrates that the Oñate icon's Spanish body is also a hotly contested site of signification. My arguments and conclusions are informed by years of ethnographic research in the Española Valley, review of the relevant academic and popular literature, interviews, and three mysterious messages sent to New Mexico newspapers by persons calling themselves "Friends of Acoma" and claiming to represent the statue vandals (Calloway 1998, 1999; *Santa Fe Reporter* 1998). I conclude that in his dismembered state, Oñate is an "open" icon that dynamically and provocatively represents the complexities and contradictions of New Mexican Chicana/o or Hispanic identity. I begin by narrating the events of 1598 and 1998 that the statue's dismemberment so profoundly collapses.

The Cuartocentenario

In 1598, Don Juan de Oñate led a group of approximately 500 colonists, including 129 soldiers, into what would become the Española Valley. His expedition included Spaniards, other Europeans, mestizos, and indigenous peoples from what was then New Spain. Upon their arrival, the colonists occupied the pueblo Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan Pueblo) and then founded a capital called San Gabriel across the Río Grande River (Barrett 2002, 47; Kraemer 2006, 80–81; Simmons 1991, 96, 111, 117). Four hundred years

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later, the town of Ohkay Owingeh is located north of the city of Española and just a few miles west of the Oñate Monument and Visitors Center.

In 1998, the commemoration of the founding of the Spanish colony of Nuevo México aroused great excitement and often focused on the conquistador. A man dressed in colonial-era Spanish costume emulated Oñate's expedition by walking from Zacatecas, Mexico, to Española. The song "Corrido de Juan de Oñate," by Española-based musician Angel Espinoza, was prominently featured on radio stations such as Española's bilingual KDCE (pronounced *¿Qué dice?*). Riding the wave of her Oñate corrido, Espinoza had a good year. She won eight awards at the 1998 Hispano Music Awards, held fifteen miles to the south of Española at Tesuque Pueblo's Camel Rock Casino. With reference to Española's annual fiesta, which crowns a community member "Oñate," Espinoza sang:

Y cada año celebramos nuestra herencia
Y recordamos todos a Don Juan
Y dedicamos nuestras fiestas en su nombre
Y conservamos esta bella tradición.
(Espinoza and Espinoza 1996)

Every year we celebrate our heritage
Everybody remembers Don Juan
We dedicate our fiestas in his name
And preserve this beautiful tradition.
(my translation)

Statues such as the one near Española also played a central role in the *cuartocentenario*, the four hundredth anniversary of Oñate's arrival in New Mexico and the advent of Spanish colonization. A similar statue was planned further south in Albuquerque (Freise 2007; Gonzales 2007). A lawyer and Oñate descendant from Madrid, Spain, by the name of Manuel Gullón de Oñate, was flown in to unveil yet another bronze statue near Santa Fe. Finally, inspired by the anniversary, a massive three-story statue of Oñate was planned for El Paso, Texas.

Partly in anticipation of the anniversary, the Oñate Monument and Visitors Center opened in the early 1990s near Ohkay Owingeh, featuring as its main attraction a monumental equestrian statue of Oñate by Albuquerque artist "Sonny" Rivera. Longtime state senator and New Mexico power broker Emilio Naranjo introduced a bill in the state legislature that proposed the center and statue (fig. 1). The legislature approved the bill, the county donated the land, and funding was appropriated through tax



Figure 1. The Don Juan de Oñate statue at the Oñate Monument and Visitors Center as it appeared in 1998. Photo by author.

bonds, grants, and the Small Business Bureau (García 1998, 3). According to an Oñate Center pamphlet from the mid-1990s, the statue cost \$108,000 and the center's total cost was \$1.5 million. Today, the center is largely funded by the Rio Arriba County Commission, and in 1998 Juan Estevan Arellano, a Nuevomexicano writer and artist, served as its director. In coordination with the county commissioners, he planned a series of events to commemorate the *cuartocentenario*. However, the founding of the Spanish colony of New Mexico was soon commemorated in a way neither Arellano nor the commissioners intended.

During the first week of January 1998, a reporter from the *Albuquerque Journal* called Arellano at the Oñate Center and asked if somebody had cut off the statue's foot. Arellano replied with a pun, "I think somebody is pulling your leg," because, he thought, he had seen the statue intact the previous day.³ Arellano told me, "When I looked from the building, believe me, it looked like nothing was wrong, but I might as well go all the way around to look at the sculpture. When I went, I saw right away [that the foot] was missing!" That morning Larry Calloway of the *Albuquerque Journal*'s northern bureau in Santa Fe received a message in the mail, along with a photo of the amputated foot. The first message read:

We invite you to visit the Oñate Distortion Museum and Visitor Center. Located eight miles north of Española. We took the liberty of removing

Oñate's right foot on behalf of our brothers and sisters of Acoma Pueblo. This was done in commemoration of his 400th year anniversary acknowledging his unasked for exploration of our land. We will be melting his foot down and casting small medallions to be sold to those who are historically ignorant.

With cutting wit, the vandals ensured that the repressed memory of the Native Americans killed and oppressed in the process of colonization would return to haunt the monument. Indeed, the removal of the statue's foot caused great excitement and captured the most coverage of any *cuarto-centenario* event. Arellano was soon fielding calls from the *Dallas Morning News*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *People* magazine, and Mexican and Spanish newspapers. Arellano says he was even interviewed live by a radio station in Madrid, Spain.

Yet the wit of the statue's dismemberment demands further explanation, and this essay seeks to acknowledge the exhortations of the statue cutters themselves. In their second message to the *Albuquerque Journal*, the Friends of Acoma wrote, "We see no glory in celebrating Oñate's fourth centennial and we do not want our faces rubbed in it. If you must speak of his expedition, speak the truth in *all its entirety*" (*italics in original*). In particular, they are referring to events that occurred in December 1598 and January 1599.

Skillful Reapers

During the first cold day of December 1598, a nephew of Oñate named Juan de Zaldívar and a small force of thirty-one men arrived at the base of the 357-foot-tall mesa that is the site of Acoma Pueblo (Gutiérrez 1991, 52–55; Knaut 1995, 38–40; Simmons 1991, 135). The colonists were on a quest for an outlet to the Pacific Ocean, but their stores had fallen short of what was required for the trip. Eight men, led by Captain Gerónimo Márquez, visited Acoma Pueblo and demanded supplies (Knaut 1995, 39–40; McGeagh 1990, 34; Simmons 1991, 135–36; Villagrà 1992, 199–208). Although the Pueblo people had judged the Spaniards' demands too great, the colonists nevertheless decided to enter the village. Leaving three men to guard the horses, Zaldívar and fourteen other colonists and several indigenous servants climbed the difficult trail to the village and eventually dispersed. When a soldier named Vivero stole two turkeys, a bird sacred to the Pueblos, and violated a Pueblo woman, Acoma's warriors attacked (Gutiérrez 1991, 53). A majority of the Spaniards, including Zaldívar, were killed. At the end of the brief battle, Zaldívar, two of his captains, eight soldiers, and two servants were dead.

Fearing the possibility of a widespread revolt, Oñate conducted judicial proceedings to decide the “just” course of action. Not surprisingly, this colonial court ruled against the Pueblos, whereupon Oñate declared a “war by blood and fire” against the people of Acoma (McGeagh 1990, 35). On January 21, 1599, Juan de Zaldívar’s young brother, Vicente Zaldívar, led a force of seventy men armed with two cannons in an attack on the pueblo. In 1610 the battle was glorified in the finale of Gaspar Pérez de Villagrà’s epic poem *Historia de la Nueva México* (1992, 215–302). In somewhat archaic Spanish, Villagrà painted a grisly scene:

No tienden, apañando, con más ayre
 La corba hoz los diestros segadores
 Quando apriessa añudan sobre el brazo
 Vna y otra manada y assí, juntos,
 Lebantán por mil partes sus gavillas,
 Como estos bravos y altos combatientes,
 Que, en vn grande ribazo tropezando
 De cuerpos ya difuntos, no cessaban
 De derramar apriessa grande suma
 De fresca y roja sangre, con que estaba
 Por vna y otra parte todo el muro
 Bañado y sangrentado, sin que cosa
 Quedase que teñida no estuviesse.

No skillful reapers do more swiftly wield
 Their curving sickles, flashing rapidly,
 When they do quickly knot within their arms
 One handful after other and do so
 Set up their sheaves in a thousand places,
 As these brave, haughty combatants
 Who, stumbling upon a lofty mound
 Of bodies now dead, never ceased
 To shed apace a mighty sum
 Of fresh red blood, by which the wall
 Was everywhere, upon all sides,
 Bathed and ensanguined, and nothing
 Remained that was not sprent with it.
 (Villagrà 1992, 267; translation by Miguel Encinias, Alfred Rodríguez,
 and Joseph P. Sánchez)

In the hard-fought battle (some would call it a massacre), 800 Pueblos were killed. No colonists died, and only a few were wounded. The approximately 500 surviving Pueblos were taken prisoner and sent to Ohkay Owingeh, where they arrived on February 9, 1599 (Knaut 1995, 45).

At Ohkay Owingeh, Oñate presided over a trial of the survivors. He meted out stiff sentences for their supposed crime of rebellion and the murder of Juan de Zaldívar, ten Spaniards, and two servants (Gutiérrez 1991, 53–54; Knaut 1995, 46; McGeagh 1990, 37; Simmons 1991, 144–46). Oñate ruled the children under twelve to be free of guilt. He placed the girls in the charge of Fray Alonso Martínez and the boys in the charge of Vicente de Zaldívar to ensure a Christian upbringing. Sixty of the small girls were later sent to Mexico City to be parceled out among the convents. Women over the age of twelve and young men between twelve and twenty-five were sentenced to twenty years of personal servitude. Two Hopis captured in the fight were sentenced to have their right hands cut off and were set free to take home news of their punishment. Finally, men over the age of twenty-five were sentenced to twenty years of servitude and *to have a foot cut off*. According to Simmons, twenty-four people suffered this punishment. For maximum effect and as an example of the dangers of rebellion, this sentence was carried out over several days in nearby pueblos.

The recent act of statue vandalism therefore evokes Oñate's brutal sentence and a wider history. The icon of a heroic Oñate was deconstructed by the statue cutters, much as it was by the Native Americans his soldiers long ago punished and killed. The Acomas proved more resilient than Oñate imagined. Within a year or two most of them escaped their servitude, fled back to the rock, and rebuilt the pueblo (Simmons 1991, 146). Today, the village of Acoma endures, and this fact is a powerful counterpoint to positive assertions of colonization and progress.⁴ As the foot cutters wrote in their second message to the *Albuquerque Journal*, "This land was ours long ago before the Conquistadors, Mexicans, or Anglos came here. We know the history of this place before their time and we have not forgotten it since their arrival." They proclaimed that, unlike the Oñate Center's director, they "are not taken in by Eurocentric history/thinking." They further elaborated on the ongoing significance of Oñate and used this to illustrate the brutality of colonization:

From the beginning our goal has been about acknowledging the truth. We visited the museum three years ago. No one attempted to talk to us or show us around. The one brochure about Oñate said only to look at the positive aspects of his expedition. What about our culture, our way of life? His expedition destroyed it. Catholicism is not the end all of all religions. Who was forced to work the mines, forced to plant the crops, and forced to build the missions?

In their message to the *Santa Fe Reporter*, the Friends of Acoma wrote:

New Mexico was poised for a grand celebration of the cuartocentenario and we could not let that happen without voicing our existence. Outside of “Indian art” and “gaming,” we have become an invisible people, even to ourselves. Our Hispanic brothers have forgotten on whose land they dwell. We have been here for thousands of years and there was plenty to share, but they claimed it all in the name of some faceless King or God, claiming it as theirs. Our people had learned not to overpopulate, not to overuse the land. We lived within our needs. Since then, all newcomers have taken from us and told us what to believe and how to think. Many of our people have forgotten how to live. Our actions were to redirect the thinking of those who have forgotten us. (*Santa Fe Reporter* 1998)

Moreover, this deconstruction of Oñate began even in his own time. Finding no precious metals, many of his colonists abandoned New Mexico in the face of indigenous resistance, a harsh climate, drought, and famine. With respect to Oñate, they often claimed he was selfish, power hungry, and an elusive manager of colonial affairs (Gutiérrez 1991, 54). The Franciscan missionaries charged that Oñate lived dishonorably and scandalously with married and unmarried women and was excessively harsh with indigenous peoples. His alleged excesses included extracting food and clothing through torture and allowing soldiers to abuse women. The viceroy ordered him to resign his governorship. He left New Mexico in 1610, never to return (Simmons 1991, 184–85). In 1614 the viceroy tried Oñate and found him guilty for excesses and abuses of leadership. His crimes included unjustly hanging two Indians and using excessive force in putting down the Acoma rebellion (188).

Awakening the Dead

From their statements, it would seem that the statue cutters believed the statue’s supporters to be mere dupes, deluded by a Eurocentric vision. In her recent article “History Carved in Stone,” literary scholar Elizabeth Archuleta (2007) would seem to agree. However, the significance of the Oñate icon for many Oñate supporters may be found in Nuevomexicanos’ own subjugation to the most powerful of the three major ethnic/racial groups in New Mexico: Anglos. Referring to another Southwest borderlands location, Richard Flores’s *Remembering the Alamo* (2002) explores the significance and meaning of San Antonio’s Alamo as a symbol. His analysis offers several lessons that are useful for our examination of the Oñate icon. On the one hand, the Alamo is both the location of an 1836 siege of Texan rebels by

Mexican government army regulars and the site of the Texan defenders' deaths and the deaths of a much larger number of Mexican troops. However, Flores is more concerned with the way "the Alamo" grew into an icon that shaped social relations between Anglos and Mexican Americans. Engaging the work of James Fernandez, Terrence Turner, and Clifford Geertz, Flores shows that the symbolic is not merely reflective or passive. Rather, it is also assertive, and symbols, through practice and their association with metaphor, produce meaning and therefore shape social identities. Citing Geertz, Flores states that symbols are both "models of" and "models for" a social order (Flores 2002, 156; Geertz 1973).

Strongly influenced by critical theory, Flores finds support for his views in a work that precedes the writings of anthropologists: Karl Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. In this text, Marx notes that nineteenth-century revolutionaries and demagogues used Roman costumes and phrases to set up modern bourgeois society (1978, 595). He famously observes that the tradition of dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living:

The awakening of the dead in those revolutions therefore served the purpose of glorifying the new struggles, not of parodying the old, of magnifying the given task in imagination, not of taking flight from their solution in reality, of finding once more the spirit of revolution, not of making its ghost walk again. (596)

Similarly, symbols such as the Alamo and Oñate have more to do with current struggles than with the times of their original referent. Flores shows that the Alamo was enshrined as a monument in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries rather than in 1836. The Oñate icon is also shaped by social relations and has more to do with the present American era than with the colonial period.

New Mexico's George Washington

The United States invaded Mexico in 1846, and in 1848 New Mexico became part of the southwestern United States. Unlike in most other parts of the United States, the large majority of Hispanics in northern New Mexico are descendants of the Southwest's Spanish colonial and Mexican-era populations. Following the U.S.-Mexican War, the land in Rio Arriba County, where Española is located, was largely appropriated from Mexican- and Spanish-era land grantees by the machinations of

the government and land speculators. Ultimately, most of the county became federal and state lands, and much of the remainder is reservation and private lands owned by Anglo American ranchers and developers or used as seasonal homes by Anglo American retirees and artists. Today, Española is ringed by Los Alamos to the west, Santa Fe to the south, and Taos to the north. Los Alamos County is home to the Los Alamos National Laboratory and is the whitest and wealthiest county in New Mexico. Santa Fe and Taos are tourist and recreation centers and have drawn an influx of wealthy Anglos attracted by the so-called Santa Fe style. The World War II-era founding of Los Alamos and the explosive growth of Santa Fe has transformed the Española Valley's longtime agricultural economy and social milieu. At the end of the twentieth century, the valley's population simultaneously provided much of the labor force for Los Alamos's service sector and suffered extraordinary unemployment and poverty rates. Today, Rio Arriba County has one of the highest rates of fatal drug overdose in the United States (Trujillo 2006). Española itself is the butt of so-called Española jokes, a regional genre of disparaging ethnic/racial humor.

In this context, the desire for an Oñate icon follows from Nuevomexicanos' struggle to retain their community's integrity. Moreover, this nostalgia is constituted in a discursive field long dominated by Anglo America. Most Nuevomexicanos are painfully aware that the United States is imagined as an Anglo American nation, that the American nation's history "began with the *Mayflower*," and that "Hispanics" are people from south of the border. At the time of Oñate's dismemberment, Arellano told a journalist, invoking common Nuevomexicano surnames, "When we go to school, we are told that our ancestors came from the East. Well, I don't know of many Martínezes, Arellanos, or Archuletas who had any ancestors who landed at Plymouth Rock" (López 1998). In this way, the dominant American iconography of the frontier, pioneers, and westward expansion represses the reality of Chicano/Hispanic claims to the Southwest. It should therefore be no surprise that Nuevomexicano discursive self-constructions often simultaneously oppose, mimic, and transform these Anglo American nationalist narratives. In the midst of a similar debate over an Oñate monument in Albuquerque, Phillip Gonzales notes that Nuevomexicano activists and Hispanophile historians such as Marc Simmons describe Oñate as New Mexico's George Washington (Gonzales 2007, 220–21). This comparison of Oñate to America's founding figure contests assertions of Anglo American primacy in the

Southwest because Oñate's arrival predates that of the Anglo American pioneers, United States independence, and even George Washington's birth. However, the assertion that Oñate is the "father" of New Mexico begs the question: who then is New Mexico's "mother"? As will be demonstrated below, many believe that mother to have lived in Acoma or another place like it.

Borderlands Relations

In the Spanish colonial and Mexican eras and during the first years of U.S. control, disparate parts of New Mexico were interconnected by a complex network of reciprocal relationships and blood ties that reached beyond the zones of colonial or national control (Brooks 2002; Bustamante 1991; Rael-Gálvez 2002). Chief among the binding forces was a slaving economy where Native American, Spanish colonial, and Mexican women and children were ransomed or purchased as war captives. As a result, innumerable Navajo, Comanche, Ute, Kiowa, Pueblo, and other indigenous people were incorporated into Hispanic New Mexico through warfare, kidnapping, servitude, adoption, ransom, and friendship. These processes created a population of Hispanicized Native people termed Genízaros (Córdova 1979, 52–59; Swadesh 1974, 214) and a truly hybrid society in both ancestral and cultural terms (Brooks 2002; Farago and Pierce 2006; Rael-Gálvez 2002). Ramon Gutiérrez states that village populations in colonial New Mexico contained three groups: a large number of landed peasants of mestizo origin, a nobility made up of fifteen to twenty families that intermarried, and the detribalized Native people called Genízaros (2003, 8–9). By one estimate, Genízaros were one-third of New Mexico's population in 1776 (Córdova 1979, 59; Schroeder 1972, 62).

In "The Matter Was Never Resolved': The Casta System of Colonial New Mexico," Adrian Bustamante (1991) illustrates New Mexicans' descent from a colonial population that was diverse in both ethnic and racial terms. The article describes a colonial society of complex *castas* in which only a limited portion of the population called itself *español* or Spanish. However, others, eager to move up the prestige ladder, assumed the racial/ethnic status of those above them. This valorization of European rather than indigenous ancestry did not end in 1848. In the 1970s, Hispanophile intellectual Fray Angélico Chávez denigrated mixed-race peoples such as the Genízaros in his effort to distance himself, and his people, from "Mexicans" and assert the Nuevomexicanos' Spanish status:

They [Genízaros] had Spanish surnames, many had Spanish blood, and all knew only the Spanish language. Generally, they were the “poor ignorant Mexicans” described by American writers and travelers of these times. (Chávez 1973, xiv)

Nevertheless, many Nuevomexicanos continue to remember indigenous ancestry and their centuries-long history of warfare and kinship with Native peoples through ritual, oral narrative, and fiction (Córdova 2006; Gandert et al. 2000; Lamadrid 2003). Commenting on this ongoing process of identity formation, Bustamante (1991, 163) cites a short quote by ninety-year-old Seferina Quintana of Pecos, which he believes may express recognition of this complex history in the New Mexican collective unconscious: “The matter was never resolved. Some say we are Spanish, others that we are Indians, and others that we are Mexican.”

One of the most productive insights of the Chicana feminism that emerged at the center of Chicana/o studies in the 1980s and 1990s, especially in the work of Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga, is a sustained assertion of this complex, internally riven, racial experience (Anzaldúa 1987; Davalos 2001; C. Esquibel 2006; Moraga 2000; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1984). Chicana/o historians cast Spanish colonialism as a gendered act of domination and sociocultural interpenetration. For example, writing of the Spanish colonization of California in terms of sexual violence, Antonia Castañeda states that the architect of California’s colonization, missionary Junipero Serra, recommended to the viceroy that colonial soldiers be encouraged to make formal and permanent unions with Native women. Such matches were supposed to form a bond between colonists and Natives (Castañeda 1993, 20). Castañeda also states that Native women were frequently the objects of assaults by soldiers (25–26). In New Mexico, Ramón Gutiérrez has provocatively, if controversially, described this aspect of Spanish colonial relations (1991, 2003).⁵ Citing colonial archives, Gutiérrez states that Native people within colonial households could be abused without fear of retaliation, “for as one friar lamented in his 1734 report to the viceroy, Spanish New Mexicans justified their rapes saying: ‘an Indian does not care if you fornicate with his wife because she has no shame [and] only with lascivious treatment are Indian women conquered’” (2003, 10). In light of this history, it should be no surprise that today’s Nuevomexicanos have both European and indigenous ancestry (J. Esquibel 2006; Kraemer 2006).

Indeed, whispers of the inauthenticity of pure Spanish ancestry run back to the time before Oñate and his conquistadors journeyed north and

indicted the colonists themselves. Juan de Oñate recruited from different regions of Mexico, and his colonists included *peninsulares* (Spaniards born in Spain), *criollos* (Spaniards born in the New World), mestizos, Indians, and approximately five blacks (J. Esquibel 2006, 80; Menchaca 2002, 83). Colonial authorities paid close attention to the sorts of men and women who filled Oñate's ranks, and they required him to register all people of mestizo blood. These authorities also barred him from taking "negro slaves, who mistreat the Indians and whom they fear for the harm they cause them" (quoted in Knaut 1995, 32). Even Oñate's own ethnic/racial ancestry was in doubt due to allegations that he was a mestizo assuming the position of a *criollo*. The poet Villagr  investigated these rumors and wrote that Oñate's mother could not have been the peninsular woman who was recorded as his mother because that woman lived in Spain, not Mexico, at the time of his birth (Cornish 1917; Menchaca 2002, 82). Instead, Villagr  claimed that on his mother's side Oñate was a descendant of Moctezuma II (Menchaca 2002, 82). Furthermore, the conquistador had married into indigenous bloodlines. Oñate's wife, Do a Isabel de Tolosa Cort s Moctezuma, was a granddaughter of both Hern n Cort s and Emperor Moctezuma II (Chipman 1977; Cornish 1917; Menchaca 2002, 82). When Oñate himself is understood as a product of a Spanish-Native encounter, his complex legacy seems almost foretold.

Conquering Cultures

With New Mexicans' contested self-identification as a reference point, a growing body of scholarship powerfully historicizes the creation of New Mexican Spanish identifications in the particular U.S. context of Nuevomexicano history (Farago and Pierce 2006; G mez 2007; Mel ndez 1997; Mitchell 2005; Montgomery 2002; Nieto-Phillips 2004). In the social sciences, the work of sociologist Phillip B. Gonzales offers the most sustained analysis of Nuevomexicano Spanish identifications (1986, 1993, 1997a, 1997b, 2001, 2007). Gonzales argues that New Mexican "Spanish" or "Spanish American" identity has two chief variants. The first rose to prominence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Gonzales views it as a protest-oriented identity that confronted Anglo American prejudice by providing the ideological ammunition to argue that no one had the right to subjugate Nuevomexicanos in a homeland that they, as Spaniards, had colonized first (1986, 1993, 1997a, 2001). A second, more conservative version of Spanish American identity arose during the Great Depression and in the course of the New Deal. According to Gonzales,

Rather than confront prejudice and discrimination, [the more conservative Spanish identity emphasized] the core commonalities between Spanish American culture and American culture. Both, for example, were conquering cultures. Thus, in places of a poverty-stricken people, the icons now favored elite conquistadors. (1997b, 125)

This is the aspect of the statue—"both were conquering cultures"—that so many find disturbing.

The oppositional aspect of Spanish American identity is demonstrated in one New Mexican historian's assertions. Joseph P. Sánchez (1990) traces the negative stereotypes of U.S. Hispanics to the colonial-era depictions of Spaniards as bloodthirsty and morally deficient. Sánchez writes, "The main premise upon which the Black Legend rested was the fear, envy, and dislike—or even hatred—of Spain by those nation-states that clashed with Spanish power shortly after Columbus's New World discoveries" (1990, 1). Thus, in revering Oñate and the other Spanish- and Mexican-era colonists and settlers, these Nuevomexicanos assert a claim to the Southwest that preceded that of the Anglo American "pioneers" who supposedly settled the West. They are also asserting an icon and view of history that flies in the face of at least one sort of Anglo American prejudice.

Pierre Nora tells us that memory is often located in specific sites such as monuments. He describes these as sites where "memory crystallizes and secretes itself at a particular historical moment" and "a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn" (Nora 1989, 7). For some Nuevomexicanos, statues of Oñate are sites where their past is reinscribed or refaced in the landscape and the reality of their own subjugation is momentarily repressed. In honoring Oñate and the other Spanish- and Mexican-era colonists, these Nuevomexicanos transgress the dominant political imagining of the United States as an Anglo nation. The Oñate Center's former director, Estevan Arellano, supports such a position: "All this statue represents is that this area—for good or bad, whatever—it was colonized by Spain, and here is our reminder that the colony was led by this man, Juan de Oñate."

In sum, in these statues many Nuevomexicanos preserve a sense of historical continuity with their past, and the troubled reality of the present is momentarily repressed. Nevertheless, as Flores writes, "Memory is not only forgetful, in attempting to preserve the past, it selectively silences those elements that attempt to rupture the quiet" (2002, 20). In this way, Oñate momentarily represses the reality of a decidedly nonvictorious present. It seems that Arellano might acknowledge such an argument. "We

value [the Oñate statue] because we have very little left about us here," he said. "We have been here for such a long time. [The statue is] something we can at least identify and say that's ours." However, as we have already seen, remembering Spanish origins is not only an act of remembering, it is also an act of forgetting—an act of negation. The statue cutters reminded us of this in the last sentence of their note to the *Santa Fe Reporter* (1998): "Finally, to those of you who delude yourselves into believing you are of pure Spanish blood, shake that family tree and you will find many limbs with Pueblo roots."⁶

Indo-Hispano Heart

The Española Valley is a place marked by the Chicano movement and Chicano ideologies of mixed racial identity. Española has achieved national recognition for its population's mastery of the Chicano art form of car modification and is widely recognized as a contender for the title "Lowrider Capital of the World" (Bright 1998). More significantly for our discussion, Española's Rio Arriba County was the center of the land grant struggle that sought the return of Spanish and Mexican land grants to their heirs. Furthermore, Rio Arriba's county seat, Tierra Amarilla, was the site of one of the most dramatic events of the Chicano movement era: the 1967 "courthouse raid" by land grant activists. In the mid-1990s a group of political activists with roots in this era, including county commissioners Alfredo Montoya and courthouse raider Moises Morales, defeated Emilio Naranjo, a longtime political powerbroker in the area and the chief force behind the Oñate monument. One suspects that these new leaders, especially Montoya, who is married to a woman from Ohkay Owingeh, would not have chosen Naranjo's monument to a Spanish conquistador.

This ongoing political mobilization is accompanied by a related, politicized sense of ethnic/racial identity. Leading land grant activists of the 1960s and 1970s often advocated the term "Indo-Hispano" as a local variant in keeping with the emerging national Chicano identity. Interestingly, Oñate Center director Arellano advocated such a view in his writings. Referring to the works of Mexican intellectual José Vasconcelos and his notion of race mixing, Arellano asserted a claim to New Mexico's landscape that evokes a kinship with Mexicans and is based, in part, on indigenous rather than Spanish ancestry:

Though once we, *la raza cósmica* (The Cosmic Race), might have been an alien presence in this land—because of our Spanish fathers—we have

now become as natural in this landscape as the piñon tree. Whether we (or Native Americans) acknowledge it or not, most of us have Native blood running through our veins. That communion with the landscape ties us to the enduring code of brotherhood just as the poet makes the landscape itself the carrier of memory. (Arellano 1997b, 32)

As an author, Arellano is strongly influenced by the early works of Chicano literature and Mexican literature. He is cofounder of a Chicano literary organization, the Academia de la Nueva Raza (Arellano 1984, 1992, 1997a, 1997b; Parsons, Padilla, and Arellano 1999). In the wake of Oñate's dismemberment, Arellano sometimes sought to reframe the Oñate Center in both Chicano and Hispano terms. In an interview with a journalist for the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, he referred to the Oñate Monument and Visitors Center as an "Indo-Hispano cultural center in the heart of Hispano culture" (López 1998).

Options for the Foot

The statue's foot was soon replaced and the police investigation is closed, but the mystery aroused by Oñate's wound remains open. Indeed, the identity of the people who cut off the statue's foot is still unknown and is subject to much speculation. The event was even the topic of a much-discussed essay by infamous author and Navajo imposter Tim "Nasdiij" Barrus (Fleischer 2006; Lee 2001, 1; Nasdiij 2000, 140–56).⁷ Perhaps because of such broad fascination with the incident, both New Mexican academics and some Española Valley residents questioned the perpetrators' connection to Native American communities. Some believe that the statue cutters were Anglo newcomers to the region. Arellano suspects the foot cutting was done by Anglo environmentalists who were embroiled in a long and bitter conflict with Nuevomexicano land activists in Rio Arriba County.⁸ Others, including Española Valley residents who have ties to Ohkay Owingeh, have told me that they believe the perpetrators were Native Americans. Some suspect the ritual Pueblo clowns that have long used humor and wit to playfully ridicule and chastise Nuevomexicanos and now Anglos.⁹

All we have to go on is the Friends of Acoma's three notes. These messages leave us with much to contemplate. In their message to the *Santa Fe Reporter*, the note writers included a bulleted list of points they wished to make (*Santa Fe Reporter* 1998). Among these assertions, they stated that the Oñate Monument and Visitors Center is a waste of money and effort, but they also noted that the center has done a good job of representing their

act of vandalism. The note writers maintained that they had no sympathy for Nuevomexicanos' assertions that Anglo Americans unjustly took their land because Nuevomexicanos themselves took land from Native peoples. They told the Catholic Church that "God is not some white guy sitting in judgment of us all. It's about spirit, you dolts, spirit!" Finally, they stated that monuments should be created for the Spanish who came to New Mexico as human beings rather than as conquerors.

The note writers followed these points with a list of options for the captured foot's fate. Among the more flippant and self-explanatory was to "cut it up and send it back to Spain" and "melt it into medallions." However, I find two other options suggested by the Friends of Acoma more powerful. In reference to the twenty-four men who lost their feet at Acoma, they stated, "The foot only has to come off 23 more times." They also asked, "Do you know where Starvation Peak is?" Here, they are referring to a hill where, according to one version of the legend, a group of "Spaniards" retreated in a battle with Native people. This story strangely parallels the events at Acoma.¹⁰ But rather than attack the Spaniards' extremely defensible position, the Native people simply camped below. Outsmarted, the Spaniards died of starvation on top of the mesa. Presumably, the foot would be left there to symbolize their fate. Among the note writers' other options for the foot were to "make a nice new stamp" and "Popé gets a statue." The "new stamp" refers to the U.S. postal stamp issued to commemorate the *cuartocentenario* that featured a picture of Española's mission/convent—a re-creation of the Spanish church and mission located in Oñate's capital of San Gabriel. Popé refers to the Ohkay Owingeh religious leader who led the rebellion that ejected the Spanish colonial government from New Mexico during the years 1680–92 (Knaut 1995, 167–70). New Mexico's then governor estimated that 389 settlers and twenty-one Franciscan friars died as a result of the revolt (14).

In addition to showcasing the wit of the Friends of Acoma, such options clearly deconstruct Oñate as an icon and reveal him as a far less powerful figure than he first appears. The Alamo is a master symbol emanating from a position of power that, at least through the 1950s, was tied to an ever-increasing and all-encompassing structure of Anglo American domination. As such, the Alamo and exhortations to "remember the Alamo" held an almost absolute power to assert a worldview and silence alternatives. In contrast, Oñate is almost exclusively honored at the limited locations of Nuevomexicano control and, I suspect, is of little significance for New Mexican Anglos. In other words, he is not an icon that can compete with the

likes of the Alamo. Rather, the New Mexican icon emanates from a position of weakness—sometimes in protest against Anglo power and sometimes in capitulation to it. Therefore, I find it no surprise that when Oñate statues are proposed, the response is usually a mixture of enthusiastic support, indifference, and ferocious opposition. Indeed, the Friends of Acoma wrote that they had to overcome an initial degree of indifference to the Oñate statue. In their note to the *Santa Fe Reporter*, they state that Oñate's foot "came off Dec. 29—a full week before anybody noticed." They added that nobody noticed the evidence left by a previous effort to sever the foot. Addressing Arellano personally, the note states, "Finally, to you who are so smug in your jobs at the Oñate center—this was our 2nd attempt. Had you looked at your beloved statue last spring you would have seen our effort."

At the beginning of this article and as proof of the widespread importance of Oñate, I stated that several localities, including Albuquerque and El Paso, planned to erect Oñate statues. However, there is more to this story. In Albuquerque the statue was fiercely opposed, and a far less celebratory statue was erected in 2005 (Gonzales 2007). The El Paso statue also met with stiff opposition, and the city council finally changed the statue's name from Oñate to *The Equestrian* (Blumenthal 2004). Furthermore, one of the Friends of Acoma's options for the foot came to pass, at least partially. In 2005 a statue was constructed to honor Ohkay Owingeh's Popé (Gisick 2005). While, as far as I know, Oñate's foot was not melted down for the statue of Popé, the latter statue does speak to the specifics of rebellion against Spanish rule. Sculptor and Jémez pueblo native Cliff Fragua depicted Popé as a traditional pueblo dweller, wearing a deerskin and holding a bear fetish in one hand. More important, he also holds a knotted maguey fiber that was used to coordinate the uprising (Knaut 1995, 169–70). While Oñate must be content with his site at the Oñate Monument and Visitors Center, Popé's statue will reside in a far more prestigious location. He is one of New Mexico's two statues housed at the National Statuary Hall in the nation's capitol building in Washington, DC.

Oñate is not even safe in Española. In 2001 a group of young activists who called themselves "La Verdad" (The Truth) were given control of Española's annual fiesta. They immediately set out to transform the festival's patriarchs, Oñate, and *la reina* or queen. They took away Oñate's sword and armor. Furthermore, in acknowledgment of indigenous ancestry, they initially sought to rename the queen after Hernán Cortés's indigenous consort, La Malinche (Cypress 1991, 2; C. Esquibel 2006, 23–26; Paz 1985). In choosing the queen's new name, that year's fiesta council intended to

honor a woman their spokesperson described as “the mother of mestizos.” Their choice was influenced both by Chicano valorizations of *mestizaje* and by northern New Mexican traditions reflected in the Matachines dance. In this dance, La Malinche is a young girl dressed in white who signifies the Virgin Mary’s power and love (Rodríguez 1996; Romero 1993, 2006, 2007). La Verdad, however, did not realize that as the mistress of Cortés, Malinche is seen as a symbol of the rape, conquest, and colonization of Native peoples under Spain and as the great betrayer of the Mexican nation (C. Esquibel 2006, 23; Paz 1985). They were also unaware of Chicana feminists’ reclamation of La Malinche as both a strong woman unbounded by patriarchal logic and the prototypical victim of Mexican and Chicano patriarchy (Alarcón 1989; Anzaldúa 1987, 44; Cypress 1991, 138–52; Del Castillo 1977; González 1991). In the ensuing controversy, they instead renamed her “La Mestiza.”

Remembering Oñate

While the National Statuary Hall’s Popé and La Verdad’s kinder and gentler Oñate are interesting icons, I prefer the Oñate Center’s bronze statue and the gaping space where his foot should have been (fig. 2). In the dismembered icon, the complexities and contradictions of New Mexican Chicana/o identity are manifest and demand confrontation. Here, I refer to the insights of Michael Taussig cited in this essay’s first lines. In *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative*, Taussig explores what happens when something sacred is defaced. He finds that defacement imbues the sacred with its power and works on objects the way jokes work on language, bringing out their inherent magic (1999, 5):

When the human body, a nation’s flag, money, or a public statue is *defaced*, a strange surplus of negative energy is likely to be aroused from within the defaced thing itself. It is now in a state of *desecration*, the closest many of us are going to get to the sacred in the modern world. (1)

In Taussig’s view, defacement is most powerful when it reveals *public secrets*—that is, the social knowledge of *knowing what not to know* (2). For New Mexican discourses of Spanish American identity, so-called “miscegenation” and its embodied evidence in mestizo bodies and New Mexico’s conquered and impoverished “Mexicans” are public secrets that must be denied. Of the public secret, Taussig writes, “Knowing it is essential to its power, equal to the denial” (6). But when the iconic representation of



Figure 2. Juan Estevan Arellano shows the space left by the removal of Oñate's foot. Photo by Jane Bernard, © Albuquerque Journal. Reprinted by permission.

such a discourse is broken open, its secrets spill out, making more than the sum of its parts. The conquering conquistador on horseback is cut open and out of the breach spills the brutally oppressed and gendered Native as well as the Anglo American conqueror. Taussig elaborates: "Defacement is like Enlightenment. It brings insides outside, unearthing knowledge, and revealing mystery. As it does this, however, as it spoliates and tears at tegument, it may also animate the thing defaced and the mystery revealed may become more mysterious" (3).

Recognizing the power of the dismembered statue, the Friends of Acoma hint at the possibility of reconciliation. According to their second note to the *Albuquerque Journal*, their quarrel is with Oñate and his supporters rather than with people they refer to as "our Hispanic brothers and sisters." They say they have no desire to "disrupt any of our communities." They wrote to the *Reporter*, "In respect to the foot, dialogue is dangerous, but we feel a response is the proper thing to do. It must be admitted that

we are proud of our actions, not so much the action itself, but the resulting education it caused.”

Near the time of the statue's dismemberment in 1998, one veteran activist from the land grant battles in the northern part of Rio Arriba County, Maria Varela, told me that her teenage daughter and her friends were approached by an Española organization that sought to make a film about Oñate. The film was intended to raise Nuevomexicano youths' self-esteem, but the daughter and her friends told the filmmakers that “they saw little or nothing in Oñate's life that was relevant to theirs. He was Spanish. They viewed themselves as Mexican.” Furthermore, Varela invoked the specifically gendered violation of the colonial encounter in her alternative response to the food-cutting crisis.

What several of us women thought the boys should have done was make a cast of the cut-off foot, put it on a velvet pillow, made a horseback pilgrimage to Laguna and Acoma, and presented it to the elders with apologies. Then we realized that we were the ones who should have done it, because it probably would have been accepted much better from the women, as the women represent the *mestizo*-izing of *la raza* in New Mexico.

In their second note to the *Albuquerque Journal*, the Friends of Acoma suggest they might have accepted the gift of the foot on a velvet pillow. They wrote, “It would have been a brave thing to have left the foot off as someone suggested!”

Unimpressed by arguments for leaving the foot off, Arellano insists that it was right to repair the footless statue. Rather than Native Americans, he saw Anglos in the space where Oñate's foot should have been. In the context of the late 1990s battle between Nuevomexicano land activists and largely Anglo American environmental groups (Kosek 2004, 2006), Arellano specifically saw Anglo environmentalists undermining his Indo-Hispano land claims. He told a journalist from the *Santa Fe New Mexican*:

What we are seeing now is that the Anglos are trying to revive the Black Legend. They are trying to create the schism between Native Americans and the Indo-Hispanos, so they can exploit it . . . I know it wasn't done by Native Americans or Hispanos, it was done by some extreme environmental group. I think the environmentalists are the ones responsible because they don't want some of the things we are doing here at the Center in relation to the land grants and water rights, are things they are trying to appropriate for their agenda. (López 1998)

In seeming response to such statements, the statue cutters wrote in their second note, "You were wrong about our heritage, we are Native Americans and native New Mexicans." Nevertheless, Arellano's suspicion is useful and it adds another level of complexity to the interpretation of the events of 1998. Here, Anglos as well as Native Americans are momentarily glimpsed in the empty space left by Oñate's foot.

Indeed, in New Mexico, as in most other places, the dynamics of domination and subjugation continually haunt each other. The foot's amputation requires Nuevomexicanos to remember the complexities and ugliness of their own history as well as its beauty. In this way, the dismembered icon parallels the views of *mestizaje* articulated by literary and cultural critic Rafael Pérez-Torres. He writes, "The double-edged sword of mestizo subjectivity—subject in and subject to history—is marked on the body. The doubleness is within" (2006, 35). When the Oñate icon was cut this same doubleness was released. Talking to me, Arellano, a man who is proud to be descended from both "Basques and Apaches," seemed to open the door to such a view in his qualified support of the statue:

Oñate wasn't the best role model, but at least we admit we are humans, and we make mistakes . . . I never heard anybody say that Oñate was a God or make him into a saint. But he probably represented the best and worst in all human beings, and that is probably why people say, "Well, let's have a statue about Oñate just to remind us who we are."

In the space where his foot should have been, the wounds and pains of enslaved Native American ancestors beckon, the United States' colonized "Mexicans" haunt the heroic Spanish colonizer, and patriarchy evokes its oppressed and gendered opposition.

Such contested representation is instructive for Chicanos and Mexican-origin peoples anywhere in the United States. After all, on closer inspection, many Chicanos, Hispanics, Latinos, Mexican Americans, or whatever we call ourselves face contradictory and mixed histories. In Texas, California, Colorado, Washington state, and Oklahoma, I have seen multiple identities with differing politics similarly dialogue, argue, and compete against one another. The footless statue renders such contestation visible and strangely generative. Indeed, only in absolute dismemberment may Don Juan de Oñate be fully remembered. "Y cada año celebramos nuestra herencia," as Angel Espinoza sang in her "Corrido de Don Juan de Oñate." "¡Viva la historia de ese gran señor!" In Taussig's words, a mystery has been reinvigorated, not dissipated, and the icon now has properties

of an allegorical emblem, complete with its recent history of death. This desecration gives such dismembered icons the strange property of opening out (Taussig 1999, 253).

Notes

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1. My account of the statue's dismemberment draws heavily on three messages mysteriously sent to New Mexico newspapers, two to the *Albuquerque Journal* and one to the *Santa Fe Reporter* (Calloway 1998; *Santa Fe Reporter* 1998). The note to the *Reporter* was a response to an August 26, 1998, editorial titled "Where's the Foot?," which requested an interview with those who had disfigured the statue. While the *Albuquerque Journal* received a photo of the severed foot with the first note, no such proof was sent to the *Reporter*. However, the note to the *Reporter* is similar in style and tone and I strongly suspect it was written by the same person or people who wrote the first note.

2. Given that northern New Mexicans deploy multiple terms of self-identification, I will use the term of ethnic identification that seems to best fit the particular sentence and its context. In the Española Valley alone, I have heard people call themselves Chicana/o, Hispanic, Spanish, Latina/o, Nuevomexicana/o, Hispana/o, raza, Indo-Hispana/o, *mexicanos de aquí* (Mexicans from here), and *la plebe*. As a result, I use terms such as Chicano, Hispanic, New Mexican, and northern New Mexican to refer to the same population. In contexts where other terms do not seem to be a better fit, I use the Spanish-language regional identifier Nuevomexicano, which parallels the Texas Mexican identification Tejano. I choose this term simply because, I believe, all members of the population it describes know and understand the term, and I have never heard anybody object to being called Nuevomexicano. I tend to avoid certain terms like Spanish, Spanish American, or Hispano. I believe that the self-identification of Spanish and Spanish American is in decline in common usage and is largely being replaced by the less controversial term Hispanic, which also fits better with national identification/assignment.

Similarly, I tend to eschew the term Hispano, although many academics have favored it, as I rarely hear it in conversation and I have found that some northern New Mexicans are unfamiliar with it.

3. Disputing Estevan Arellano's statement that the statue was intact the day before he received a call from the *Albuquerque Journal*, the Friends of Acoma wrote that they cut the foot off days before anybody noticed.

4. Acoma's presence evokes the absence of many other pueblos. Between 1598 and 1680, Pueblo settlements declined from eighty-one to thirty-one. Similarly, between 1598 and 1660 the numbers of Pueblo people declined from 60,000 to around 17,000 (Barrett 2002, 64–64).

5. Gutiérrez's *When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away* received acclaim from historians and criticism from Native American intellectuals and community leaders. Part of the objection to this work stems from Gutiérrez's depiction of the primal union of conquistador and Native women as an act of mutual desire. Native women are represented as willing participants in acts of colonial sexual domination. The controversy continues to follow Gutiérrez. In a 2006 visit to the University of New Mexico, he was accused by Native students of representing Pueblo women as "lustful" (C. Sanchez 2006).

6. The note writers' analysis requires a further shaking of the family tree. Such an effort would reveal that Pueblos are also hybrid subjects who share mixed roots with the Nuevomexicano communities that surround them. The cultural borrowings of Pueblos from European sources have been well documented by anthropologists and historians, including in the work of Santa Clara native Edward Dozier (1970, 65–71) and Edward Spicer (1962).

7. Timothy Barrus authored three well-received books under the false identity "Nasdijj" (2000, 2003, 2005). The first of these was *The Blood Runs Like a River through My Dreams*, which won the Mountains & Plains Booksellers Association's 2001 regional book award for nonfiction (Lee 2001). In these books and in their promotion, the author claimed to be the child of a Navajo mother and an Anglo American father, but he refused to reveal his full legal name. In 2006 "Nasdijj" was unmasked as Timothy Barrus, a white man of no Native ancestry and struggling author of gay erotica (Fleischer 2006).

8. For a detailed description of the conflict between Nuevomexicano land activists and environmentalists, see Jake Kosek's *Understories* (2006) and his article "Deep Roots and Long Shadows" (2004).

9. In *The Matachines Dance*, Sylvia Rodríguez (1996) asserts that Pueblo clowns enact a "hidden transcript." This text illustrates how Pueblos have defended their communities and negotiated with Spanish and Anglo American dominance.

10. The legend surrounding Starvation Peak also speaks to another period of domination. According to a second version of the legend, the Native people surrounded a group of "Americans" crossing the Santa Fe Trail. Similar to the Spanish in the other version of the legend, these Americans starved to death on the peak.

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